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INFO RUEHZK/ECOWAS COLLECTIVE PRIORITY  
RUEHUJA/AMEMBASSY ABUJA PRIORITY 8236  
RUEHWR/AMEMBASSY WARSAW 0093  
RUEHCD/AMCONSUL CIUDAD JUAREZ 0069  
RUEHIT/AMCONSUL ISTANBUL 0076  
RUEHSO/AMCONSUL SAO PAULO 0091

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 LAGOS 000044

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

STATE FOR AF/W  
STATE FOR INR/AA  
CIUDAD JUAREZ FOR DONNA BLAIR  
ISTANBUL FOR TASHAWNA SMITH  
SAO PAULO FOR ANDREW WITHERSPOON

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/11/2016  
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [NI](#)  
SUBJECT: DELTA STATE: IJAWS' FRUSTRATION INCREASES

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Classified By: Consul General Brian L. Browne for reasons 1.4 (b and d)

[11](#). (C) Summary: In a January 6 conversation with Consul General, Ijaw businessman Joseph Penawou warned of the feud starting to percolate between Delta State Governor Ibori and the Ijaw community in Warri. According to Penawou, the lack of political concessions to the Ijaw community has embittered Ijaw militant leader Tom Polo, de facto head of FNDIC. Tom Polo's group engineered the January-February 2006 kidnapping and the destruction of oil pipelines resulting in a diurnal 500-600,000 barrel decline in oil production. Evidently, Tom Polo's group kidnapped the seven Philippino oil workers over the January 19-21 weekend. If this marks the resumption of disruptive activities by Tom Polo's group after nearly a year's hiatus, security conditions for the oil companies operating around Warri could further decline. End summary.

[12](#). (C) In a January 6 conversation with Consul General, Ijaw businessman Joseph Penawou warned that Ijaws in Warri felt they were being ignored in the apportionment of nominations for important state offices by the dominant party in the State, the PDP. Penawou forecasted unrest unless balm was applied to this Ijaw wound. First and foremost, Delta State Governor Ibori had travestied the gubernatorial primaries by steamrolling the nomination of his Itsekiri cousin, Emmanuel Uduaghan, as the PDP candidate.

[13](#). (C) Not only did Ibori's heavy-handedness exercise the Ijaws because they felt shunned, it also implied that an Ijaw would be precluded from the governorship for years to come: Uduaghan is also from Warri. Should he become governor, a subsequent chief executive would have to come from another part of the state, thus precluding an Ijaw, who mostly reside in the southern portion of the state around Warri. Moreover, when Uduaghan served as Secretary of State Government, part of his mandate was to calm ethnic tension in Warri. Ijaws believe he willfully failed at that task. Instead of promoting genuine reconciliation between the Itsekiri and Ijaw, Uduaghan tried to mute Ijaw grievances by buying the silence of those Ijaw figures susceptible to being bought, Penawou contended. Ijaws felt as governor, Uduaghan would only extend this cynical policy.

[14](#). (C) Also troubling the Ijaw is that the Warri seat in the

National House of Representatives is held by an Itsekiri; the State Assembly seat from Warri is held by an Itsekiri; and local government councils are also dominated by the Itsekiri.

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Ijaw Leader Demonstrates His Frustration  
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15. (C) Demonstrating Tom Polo's frustration with this state of affairs, Penawou noted that Polo had engineered the dismissal of two Federated Niger Delta Ijaw Communities (FNDIC) executives, President Bello Okobo and Spokesman George Timinimi, from their FNDIC offices. This duo was also on the Delta State Government's payroll. These two became seen by the Ijaw community as having been co-opted by Uduaghan's money. However, Ibori and Uduaghan misread the FNDIC hierarchy in thinking, by compromising Okobo and Timinimi, they could also control FNDIC and Tom Polo, Penawou offered. Despite Okobo's and Timinimi's titles, Tom Polo was the de facto leader of FNDIC, Penawou asserted. Though Okobo and Timinimi remain in FNDIC, they have been ousted from executive office because they were seen as more wedded to fattening their individual purses than to pursuing collective Ijaw political demands.

16. (C) Compounding Polo's political distemper is the fact that he lacks sufficient cash flow to keep his militia together, Penawou confided. It was hoped that access to political office also would mean access to government revenue. Now, Polo might resort to disruptive activities, like kidnapping, in order to infuse FNDIC with much-needed cash, predicted Penawou. (Note: Prior to the January 19 kidnapping, the last kidnapping claimed by FNDIC occurred March of last year). Penawou feared that, since Ibori was deaf to Ijaw concerns, FNDIC, still the largest Ijaw militant group, would be forced into action.

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17. (C) What could somewhat mitigate against full remobilization of FNDIC is Ijaw satisfaction at seeing the PDP nominate one of their own, Goodluck Jonathan, as the vice-presidential (VP) candidate. Already, many Ijaw figures are gravitating toward Jonathan, who heretofore had been considered a good chap but a bit of a political cipher. To enhance Jonathan's position in the PDP and thus hopefully his status should the PDP ticket win, Chief of Army Staff Azazi has taken it upon himself to solicit funds from prominent Ijaws to devote to the PDP presidential campaign. The more money they donate, the more sway Jonathan will have before and after the election, Azazi told Penawou.

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Comment  
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18. (C) Summary: The choice of Goodluck Jonathan as the PDP VP candidate is a source of pride for many Ijaws. However, pride does not answer hunger nor does Jonathan's apparent ascendance erase the Ijaw community's disappointment in Warri. In short, all politics is local. At the local level in Warri, Tom Polo and FNDIC believe their relatively good behavior at having desisted from kidnappings and attacks has been greeted by a political stiff arm by the PDP state hierarchy. Unless this sense of being left in the cold is assuaged, Tom Polo may begin to heat up, to almost everyone's chagrin. If this sensitive moment is not handled correctly, Tom Polo and FNDIC may go into action. If so, oil companies and expatriates in the region would be affected. End summary.  
BROWNE